

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7402

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BURSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: MADRID "DAY OF STRUGGLE" ROUNDUP

REF: MADRID 7552 (NOTAL)

1. MADRID'S CIVIL GOVERNOR, IN A LATE-NIGHT PRESS CONFERENCE, DESCRIBED THE OPPOSITION-BACKED "DAY OF STRUGGLE" (REFTEL AS A FAILURE AND COMPLIMENTED THE CITIZENS OF THE CAPITAL ON THEIR "MATURITY." ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL FIGURES, SOME 53,000 WORKERS, PRINCIPALLY IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND METAL- WORKING INDUSTRIES, WERE INVOLVED IN STOPPAGES OF VARYING DURATIONS (OPPOSITION LABOR
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GROUPS PUT THE FIGURE AT 200,000). SCATTERED SMALL-

SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS, WHICH REPORTEDLY WERE BROKEN UP QUICKLY BY THE POLICE, TOOK PLACE THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

2. THE ONLY SERIOUS DISTURBANCE TOOK PLACE LAST NIGHT, WHEN DEMONSTRATORS CLASHED WITH POLICE AFTER A FUNERAL MASS IN MADRID'S UNIVERSITY CITY FOR THE YOUTH MURDERED DURING A SEPT 27 DEMONSTRATION. THE GOVT REPORTS THAT SOME 7,000 MOURNERS ATTENDED THE MASS, WHILE EL PAIS, INDULGING, WE BELIEVE, IN CONSIDERABLE HYPERBOLE, PUTS THE NUMBER AT 40,000 TO 50,000. IN ANY EVENT, A FEW THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS BROKE WINDOW AND PUSHED AUTOMOBILES AND BENCHES INTO THE STREET ALL ALONG CALLE PRINCESA AND INTO PLAZA ESPANA. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE POLICE CHARGED REPEATEDLY AND USED RUBBER BULLETS, SMOKE BOMBS AND TEAR GAS TO BREAK UP THE CROWD.

3. THE OFFICIAL GOVT COMMUNIQUE STATES THAT SHOTS WERE FIRED ONLY ONCE, OVER THE HEADS OF DEMONSTRATORS IN THE WORKING CLASS QUARTER OF VALIECAS. NEITHER THE GOVT NOR THE PRESS REPORTS ANYONE WOUNDED BY GUNFIRE. AT LEAST 50 ARRESTS WERE MADE, AND, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, HUNDREDS WERE ROUGHED UP BY POLICE. MOST OF THEM IN THE CONFRONTATIONS ALONG PRINCESA.

4. EL PAIS, WHICH ALLEGES THAT FIVE OF ITS REPORTERS, ALONG WITH SOME FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, WERE BEATEN BY THE POLICE, STRONGLY CRITICIZES THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES THIS MORNING FOR THEIR "OVERREACTION AND UNNECESSARY TOUGHNESS." PAIS STATES EDITORIALY THAT THE POLICE MUST BE "TRAINED EFFECTIVELY AND MADE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT DEMOCRACY MEANS, OR EFFECTIVE POLITICAL REFORM WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE." PAIS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGES, HOWEVER, THAT MADRID CIVIL GOVERNOR ROSON CALLED THE NEWSPAPER LAST NIGHT IMMEDIATELY ON RECEIPT OF A TELEGRAM OF PROTEST IN ORDER TO EXPRESS HIS REGRET OVER THE CONTRETEMPS.

5. COMMENT: YESTERDAY'S "DAY OF STRUGGLE" SIMPLY DID NOT PRODUCE THE DISORDERS AND MARTYRS WHICH MOST HAD FEARED AND A FEW HAD HOPED FOR. MOST OF THE CAPITAL WAS QUITE NORMAL THROUGHOUT THE DAY, ALTHOUGH WE ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CERTAIN NOT TO HAVE HEARD THE LAST OF THE REPORTED POLICE OVERREACTION IN THE EVENTS ALONG PRINCESA. THE POPULATION OF MADRID HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN LARGELY UNRESPONSIVE TO "DAY OF STRUGGLE" CALLS; A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN YESTERDAY'S CASE WAS THE CONFLICTING PRESURE AT WORK WITHIN THE OPPOSITION ITSELF. AS WE HAVE BEEN TOLD PRIVATELY BY A NUMBER OF OPPOSITION LEADERS, AND AS EL PAIS AND CAMBIO 16 HAVE EMPHASIZED IN RECENT

EDITORIALS, MANY OPPOSITION GROUPS BELIEVE THAT THEY
AND THE COUNTRY HAVE MUCH TO LOSE THROUGH CONFRONTATIONS
IN THE STREETS BETWEEN HOT-HEADED DEMONSTRATORS AND EDGY,
INTOLERANT PUBLIC ORDER UNITS.
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